

2019 Through the Bible Reading: Bible Study Support

The Book of Ruth	
Background (Who, what, why, when)	<p>The book of Ruth develops the theme of loyalty throughout the narrative. It is a very important historical book in our Old Testament of the Bible, as it traces the lineage of King David and ultimately that of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Ruth was a Moabite woman, whose sense of piety and devotion to her mother-in-law Naomi led to her marriage to the prominent Boaz of Bethlehem in Judah. Her name means “friend, companion.” The book of Ruth is read in Jewish synagogues on Pentecost, the Feast of the Lord known as the Feast of Weeks or Shavuot - שבועות - the Jewish Harvest Festival. It is the second of five Megillot or Scrolls that are read during the Festivals of the Lord (Leviticus 23) or Jewish Memorial Holidays (in addition to Song of Songs, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther). Ruth shows that God's love is open to both Christian and Gentile, as He blessed the Moabite woman who chose the Lord for her God (1:16), and placed her life under God’s providential wing (2:12). Ruth and the lineage of King David in the last lines of the book (4:17-22) are repeated in the genealogy of Jesus Christ in the Gospel of Matthew (1:4-6) in the New Testament. According to the Talmud (Jewish tradition), the prophet Samuel wrote the book of Ruth though the text itself says nothing of the author. The final words of the book link Ruth with her great-grandson, David (Ruth 4:17–22), so we know it was written after David’s anointing. The genealogy at the end of the book shows David’s lineage through the days of the judges, acting as a support for his rightful kingship. Solomon is not mentioned, leading some to believe the book was written before David ascended to the throne. The events of Ruth occurred sometime between 1160 BC and 1100 BC, during the latter period of the judges (Ruth 1:1). These were dark days, full of suffering brought about by the Israelites’ apostasy and immorality. The book of Ruth opens with a report of famine, which drove Naomi’s family out of Bethlehem into neighboring Moab. Naomi eventually returned with Ruth because she heard “that the LORD had visited His people in giving them food” (1:6).</p>
Interesting Facts in Ruth	<p>The book was written from Naomi’s point of view. Every event related back to her: her husband’s and sons’ deaths, her daughters-in-law, her return to Bethlehem, her God, her relative, Boaz, her land to sell, and her progeny. Almost without peer in Scripture, this story views God through the eyes of a woman in hardship. Naomi has been compared to a female Job. She lost everything: home, husband, sons and her livelihood. She joined the ranks of Israel’s lowest members: the poor and the widowed. She cried out in her grief and neglected to see the gift that God placed in her path—Ruth.</p> <p>Ruth herself embodied loyal love. Her moving vow of loyalty (<u>Ruth 1:16–17</u>), though obviously not marital in nature, is often included in modern wedding ceremonies to communicate the depths of devotion to which the new couples aspire. The book reveals the extent of God’s grace—He accepted Ruth into His chosen people and honored her with a role in continuing the family line into which His appointed king, David, and later His Son, Jesus, would be born (Matthew 1:1, 5).</p>
Reasonable Defense for the Faith in the book of Ruth	<p>Obedience in everyday life pleases God. When we reflect His character through our interactions with others, we bring glory to Him. Ruth’s sacrifice and hard work to provide for Naomi reflected God’s love. Boaz’s loyalty to his kinsman, Naomi’s husband, reflected God’s faithfulness.</p>

	<p>Naomi’s plan for Ruth’s future reflected selfless love. The book of Ruth showed the Israelites the blessings that obedience could bring. It showed them the loving, faithful nature of their God. This book demonstrates that God responds to His people’s cry. He practices what He preaches, so to speak. Watching Him provide for Naomi and Ruth, two widows with little prospects for a future, we learn that He cares for the outcasts of society just as He asks us to do (Jeremiah 22:16; James 1:27). Things are not always what they appear to be. God sees things not as we see them. God is always at his work. He will do what he says he will do. Be careful not to jump to conclusions. We cannot know the end of the story before the end of the story comes. There is always more to the story. And that is for God’s glory, and that is for our good.</p>
<p>Memory Verse</p>	<p>“Then the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man.” (1 Samuel 10:6 NKJV)</p>
<p>Practical Application to memory verse</p>	<p>As growing believers, we need to be committed to a Spirit-filled expression of their gifts. When a person is filled with the Holy Spirit, they are truly changed into a new person, empowered to walk in the fruit of the Spirit and the power of the Spirit. Make this a part of your daily prayer.</p>
<p>Life Application from Biblical Themes in Ruth</p>	<p>1) God is concerned about all people regardless of race, nationality, or status.</p> <p>Ruth was not a Jew. She was a Moabitess. Even though many discriminated against her, God loved her just the same. God does not discriminate and He loves all people just the same and He commands us to love as He loves—love all people.</p> <p>2) Men and women are both equally important to God.</p> <p>God cares about men and women equally and we are to live in unity with one another. Many of the false religions of the world discriminate between the genders. Christianity consistently honors men <i>and</i> women at the same level. There is no difference in His eyes.</p> <p>3) There is no such thing as an unimportant person in God’s eyes.</p> <p>At a surface level, few saw Ruth as an important person. She was from Moab, which was a nation that originated from an incestuous encounter between Lot and one of his daughters (see Genesis 19:30-36). Ruth was a poor widow. She was living in a foreign land away from her birth family. Yet, Ruth was a very important person in the redemptive plan of God. Not only was she in the lineage of Jesus Christ she had a calling as a servant in her community to be a faithful grandmother that would influence the future king of Israel. Sometimes God’s plan involves empowering people who are considered to be the underdogs or unimpressive from humanity’s perspective. His strength is made perfect in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).</p> <p>4) God uses “little” things to accomplish great plans.</p> <p>What an amazing plan God had for a series of “little” things that all added up to important pieces in God’s big plan. God intended for Ruth to be a part of the story of the lineage of Jesus Christ. He pulled together events such as the famine, Naomi’s relocation to Moab, their return to Bethlehem, Boaz’s bloodline and many other events just to ensure that Ruth would be a part of His plan. And God does that same thing in our lives today! There are no coincidences with God. All is working towards His ultimate good (Romans</p>

8:28).

5) God has a Redeemer in place who can rescue us from the devastation of our own sin.

God has a Redeemer for our lives too, and His name is Jesus Christ. Boaz was a *type* (prophetic symbol) of Christ and His redemptive work in our lives today. We are all desolate as a result of our sinful natures. We are all empty apart from Christ, just as Naomi was empty and devastated after she had lost everything and returned to Judah. Our sin has rendered us empty and desolate spiritually. But Jesus Christ, as our kinsman redeemer is able to save us out of our situation. He wants to rescue us from the penalty of our sin—death. And all we have to do to be rescued is to call on Him in faith and ask Him to save us (Romans 10:13). Be sure to live out your calling and purpose in the Lord, even during challenging times. Pray for God to increase your burden for the lost and take part of His great commission to make disciples of others.